

How Norfolk's Parking System Works for You

Norfolk provides much of the parking available in our downtown and does so as a service for its citizens, visitors and businesses. Norfolk has taken the lead in providing this parking system versus private providers so that parking plays a positive role in attracting and support our tax base and to ensure a reasonable level of parking facilities to the benefit of all. Ours' is a user fee based system so that the users of the facilities pay for those services and not the tax payer or business district.

In parking there are two truths: No one likes receiving a parking ticket and everyone loves finding a parking space right where and when they need one. Those are the two sides of parking wherever in the world you may go.

The following provides insight and overview as to how Norfolk balances these two truths.

Norfolk's parking enforcement is designed to:

1. Ensure public safety by ticketing cars blocking fire hydrants or exits, or parking in a manner that otherwise endangers public safety.
2. Manage short term, monthly and day parking to maximize the ability of residents, visitors, shoppers, clients, and workers to access the parking they need to conduct business, work, enjoy entertainment, or participate in other activities. Norfolk has two kinds of paid parking:
 - Meters are for people conducting short-term business (shop, dine, visit eye doctor, post office, or visit an attraction). Norfolk has approximately 600 meters in operation. Enforcement is meant to ensure turn over of these limited and preferred spaces for short term parking needs.
 - Garages and surface lots are for persons needing more time, or who work downtown and park for the day. The parking garage system is set up for patrons' convenience and affordability. Norfolk has 13 public garages and 10 public lots.
 - The NET bus carries people from outlying, lower-cost garages and lots to work and other destinations downtown.
 - Monthly parking rates in Norfolk are much lower than those found in comparable cities for workers using garages or lots.
 - Hourly rates also are lower than comparable cities.
 - Special event rates reduce cost and improve access for visitors to special events and festivals.

Parking/Ticketing FACTS

1. Norfolk's public parking system is self-supporting. Parking rates, enforcement (except for public safety enforcement by police officers) is paid for through the fees and fines of users.
2. Norfolk issues approximately 85,000 tickets a year for violation of parking regulations.
 - City Council's policy is that enforcement focuses on ensuring public safety and reasonably ensuring downtown on-street spaces turn over. By public safety we mean that persons blocking a fire hydrant or causing an unsafe traffic situation are strictly enforced.
 - On-street spaces are enforced but not as strictly as public safety. Meter monitors are provided some discretion whether a warning is appropriate, for example, if someone arrives before the ticket has been completed, if someone is assisting an infirm passenger, and other reasonable options.
 - Our intent is to support our business base, treat our patrons fairly and ensure public safety.
3. 85 percent of tickets are collected and this measures well against national averages.

• Boston	87%
• Milwaukee	74%
• Philadelphia	71%
• Washington DC	74%
• Los Angeles	71%
• Denver	80%
• San Diego	80%
• Seattle	86%
• Baltimore	72%
• Richmond	83%
• Charlotte	80%
• Winston-Salem	80%
• Norfolk	85%

National Average 74%

- Collections for last 5 complete fiscal years are:

FY	Collections	Cost to Collect*
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○ 2004	\$ 2,493,055	\$ 364,475
○ 2005	\$ 2,234,340	\$ 325,393
○ 2006	\$ 2,058,819	\$ 330,450
○ 2007	\$ 2,282,917	\$ 380,743
○ 2008	\$ 2,244,356	\$ 365,013

4. Norfolk is a very transient area, creating a larger delinquency environment and making Norfolk's collection rates even more remarkable. (Persons leave area and state and do not pay tickets and/or abandon vehicles.)

** Parking division contracts collection, which has nearly doubled collection rates.*

Ticketing Process

- **DAY ONE.** Tickets are placed on windshield in an orange color to make it easier for drivers to see. Information on how to protest or to pay the ticket is printed on the ticket.
- **DAY 15.** Parking sends a courtesy letter after 15 days from issuance reminding the patron to pay or protest before the 30th day when penalties come into play.
- **DAY 30.** At the 30th day, Parking sends a second letter, advising that a \$50 late fee has been added pursuant to city code and warning that delay will result in more penalties.
- **DAY 90.** At the 90th day, Parking sends a third letter, adding a \$20 administrative fee.
- **DAY 115.** After 115 days, Parking issues a stop order to the State Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). DMV will then collect whenever that vehicle comes before it for renewal of license or other DMV business.
- **THREE OR MORE UNPAID TICKETS.** Lastly, if a vehicle has three or more unpaid tickets, it is placed on the tow list and, if identified in the normal course of enforcement (we have no predatory tow operation out looking for scofflaws) the vehicle will be towed to the City tow lot. Once a vehicle has been towed, the owner will have to pay outstanding tickets, plus a fixed \$135 fee (established by the City) to cover towing costs and storage to redeem the vehicle. After three days, storage costs continue to accrue until the car is claimed, or until the car is permitted to be sold by the City to recover its costs.
- **NEW:** Norfolk is applying to a State program called a Debt Off-Set Program that allows a city to apply to collect outstanding debts from refunds due from the Commonwealth. Prior to sending an income tax refund check, for example, and if the City has applied to have the debt collected, the State will first pay the debt to the City, refunding only the remaining balance – if any – to the taxpayer.

The Norfolk parking system is a significant contributor to the vitality of Norfolk's economy and growth, carefully balancing management and enforcement to serve all of Norfolk's people.